

Health Alert: Pertussis

**Associated with
Special Olympics
events in Cape
Girardeau and
Mexico, Missouri**

August 11, 2004

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/>.

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Health Alert
August 11, 2004**

**FROM: RICHARD C. DUNN
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Pertussis Associated with Special Olympics events in
Cape Girardeau and Mexico, Missouri**

During the month of July, two cases of pertussis were associated with Special Olympic events in Cape Girardeau (July 17 –18) and Mexico, Missouri (July 26 – 30). The Section for Communicable Disease Prevention is developing letters to be sent to athletes, or parents/guardians of athletes, coaches and staff, notifying them of possible exposure, along with the signs and symptoms of pertussis. Persons with symptoms are recommended to see their health care provider for possible treatment. Athletes attending the Mexico event and living in group homes will be given recommendations to receive post-exposure prophylaxis, regardless of whether symptoms are present. All other persons associated with the Mexico Special Olympics are being notified of possible exposure and recommended to see their health care provider if symptoms develop.

Attached are four samples of the letters being sent out by the Section for Communicable Disease Prevention to the participants of the Cape Girardeau and Mexico, Missouri Special Olympic events.

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P.O. Box 570

Jefferson City, MO 65102
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Fax: (573) 751-6041

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Attachment 1

Dear Athlete:

A case of confirmed pertussis has been reported in an individual attending the Special Olympic softball tournament in Cape Girardeau on July 17 and 18, 2004. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis symptoms begin with cold symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help the cough.

If you are currently ill with the symptoms described above, talk to your doctor without delay. Giving antibiotics early can help you get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. Please take this letter if you see the doctor regarding this issue.

Should you have any questions, please contact your local health department or Department of Health and Senior Services at the toll free number (866) 628-9891.

Sincerely,

Harvey L. Marx, Jr., Chief
Disease Investigation Unit

HM/bw

Attachment 2

Dear Volunteer:

A case of confirmed pertussis has been reported in an individual attending the Special Olympic softball tournament in Cape Girardeau on July 17 and 18, 2004. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis symptoms begin with cold symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help the cough.

If you are currently ill with the symptoms described above, talk to your doctor without delay. Giving antibiotics early can help you get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. Please take this letter with you if you see the doctor regarding this issue.

Should you have any questions, please contact your local health department or Department of Health and Senior Services at the toll free number (866) 628-9891.

Sincerely,

Harvey L. Marx, Jr., Chief
Disease Investigation Unit

HM/bw

Attachment 3

Dear Athlete:

A case of confirmed pertussis has been reported in an individual attending the Special Olympic sports camp at the Mexico Military Academy in Mexico on July 26 thru July 29, 2004. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis symptoms begin with cold symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help the cough.

If you are currently ill with the symptoms described above, talk to your doctor without delay. Giving antibiotics early can help you get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. Please take this letter if you see the doctor.

If you are a resident of a group home, in this instance, antibiotic post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended to prevent further transmission.

Should you have any questions, please contact your local health department or Department of Health and Senior Services at the toll free number (866) 628-9891.

Sincerely,

Harvey L. Marx, Jr., Chief
Disease Investigation Unit

HM/bw

Attachment 4

Dear Volunteer:

A case of confirmed pertussis has been reported in an individual attending the Special Olympic sports camp at the Mexico Military Academy in Mexico on July 26 thru July 29, 2004. Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis symptoms begin with cold symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help the cough.

If you should become ill or if you are currently ill with the symptoms described above, talk to your doctor without delay. Giving antibiotics early can help you get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the disease to others. Please take this letter with you if you see the doctor regarding this issue.

Should you have any questions, please contact your local health department or Department of Health and Senior Services at the toll free number (866) 628-9891.

Sincerely,

Harvey L. Marx, Jr., Chief
Disease Investigation Unit

HM/bw